COMIC SHOP NEWS™

THE MAN WHO'S SEEN
EVERYTHING HAS NEVER SEEN
A MODERN-DAY HORROR
LIKE THIS

A JOHN CONSTANTINE™
GRAPHIC NOVEL

HELLBLAZER™:
PANDEMONIUM

JAMIE DELANO
JOCK

FEBRUARY 2010

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"It Took Me So Long to Find Out"

Life is a series of events, most inconsequential, some significant. The problem is, people rarely know the difference in the two until long after the events have passed.

Those events and their importance in one man's life is the focus of ***Daytripper***, a new Vertigo series by *Gabriel Bá & Fábio Moon*. "This is the story of Brás de Oliva Domingos, a regular guy who wants to be a writer, but still has to face the facts he's just an obituary writer on the newspaper," Bá said. "To make matters a little worse, his father is a famous novelist. The story follows Brás back and forward through his past, present and future, showing key moments on his life, some minor and other of great relevance—moments in which the events that happen, the people he knows, and the decisions he makes will shape the person he will become."

In a medium dominated by characters of great power and ability, it may seem a bit surprising to see a comic focus so strongly on the life of a regular guy—but some of the greatest works of modern literature, including ***The Red Badge of Courage*** and ***Our Town***, have focused on the lives of regular guys, so Bá & Moon are in esteemed company there.

Still... an obituary writer? It seems like the ultimate "dead end job," writing about the accomplishments and events of lives that have recently ended. What led to the decision to choose that as Bras's occupation? "Maybe he has chosen this job to prove himself as a writer... or maybe it was the only one left," Moon said. "Some people see it as one of the most valuable sections on a newspaper, others as a crappy job. And what does the job you have say about who you are? All these questions interest us—and this is the kind of questioning that we like to include on this series."

Bá & Moon have set ***Daytripper*** in their own country, Brazil. Why Brazil, and how large a part does it play in ***Daytripper***? "We wanted to deal with real life subjects like family, work, and relationships," Bá said. "We wanted to be true to these subjects—and the best way to do it was to set the story in Brazil."

"We want the reader to feel comfortable with the things we're talking about, to feel at home," Moon added. "The only way to do that is to tell a story that makes us feel at home."

Daytripper is an introspective book that's very much set in the real world; what convinced Bá & Moon that this would work as a series, and how did it end up at Vertigo, an imprint better known for fantasy/suspense/horror? "Introspective real-life stories are the ones we like to tackle, with a bit of fantasy or surrealism to spice it a little," Bá said. "Over the years, it became clear that our strength as storytellers shines brighter when we deal with these themes; *Bob Schreck* and the Vertigo people realized that, so they asked us for something like that, instead of something like any other Vertigo book."

"I like to think we write stories about all the fantasy, suspense and horror we find in the real world," Moon added.

The first issue of ***Daytripper*** evokes memories of the works of many other acclaimed South American writers, including the quiet reality of *Julio Cortazar*, the humble, straightforward magical realism of *Gabriel Garcia Marquez* (the love relationship that's a part of the story is certainly reminiscent of the relationship of Marquez's ***Chronicles of a Death Foretold***) and the complex, interwoven narrative of *Jorge Luis Borges*.

"You could include *Machado de Assis, Guimarães Rosa, José Saramago*, and some others writers of the Portuguese language to that list," Moon said. "All of them deal with real life situations on their work, creating characters the reader can relate to, even on the most unbelievable stories."

"We could say that we like to tell stories in comics that we most often find in books," Bá continued. "Even though we have the 22 page monthly comic format to set the limits for our chapters, they way we actually tell this story is nothing like any monthly on the shelves."

Daytripper is built around a personal quest or journey; what is Brás looking for, and what does he find? "What we want with this series—or even what we seek in life, maybe—is not to find the right answers in the end, but to ask the right questions," Bá said. "Of course we will get *somewhere* with this story, as we cherish endings as one of the most important parts of a story."

"Life has all sorts of weights and shapes depending on the point on your life where you look at it," Moon explained. "When you're young, everything looks like a big adventure and a challenge and your life can change at any moment—but when you're very old, you feel everything is said and done and what's left of life really has not that much impact over you any more."

How did Bá & Moon settle on ***Daytripper*** as the title of the series? Is the title significant? "We love the Beatles—who doesn't?" Bá said. "I remember reading something saying this song was not really about innocent trips to the country, but actually about experimenting with drugs. Even if this is just some crazy theory, this kind of duality—the idea of stories with multiple layers of interpretation—always had a strong appeal to us, and we think the most casual real-life events can have all sorts of meanings.

"It also relates to all these different moments on Brás' life," Moon said, "all these trips in time we take the reader on to show the full picture of our character's life."

Vertigo Executive Editor *Karen Berger* has compared ***Daytripper*** to a puzzle; what makes the comparison so appropriate? "That's what life is, in the end," Bá said. "A big puzzle. We want to find out what the complete image is in the end. Even so, every new piece that fits into place gives us great joy. It's all we really need to know to continue, that we're in the right direction."

There also seems to be a dreamlike quality to the series, even in its most mundane moments; is that intentional? "Life can be all we can dream of," Moon replied enigmatically . "It also can turn into a nightmare. Sometimes we just want to wake up out of it."

While the creators of ***Daytripper*** may sound quite venerable, readers would be surprised to learn that Bá and Moon are only thirty-three years old. "Fábio and I are twin brothers, and we've been doing comics together for over thirteen years now," Bá said. "We live in Brazil and we have several books published here, along with some awards. Some of our own stories have been published in the U.S. in books like ***Ursula*** and ***De:Tales***.

"We started working with other writers in 2005, leading to widely acclaimed projects like ***Casanova***, ***Umbrella Academy***, ***Sugarshock!***, and ***BPRD: 1947***. From time to time, we like to go back to the independent publications and make comics like the Eisner winner anthology **5**, and the our horror tale ***PIXU***, both projects done in partnership with cartoonists *Becky Cloonan* and *Vasilis Lolos*."

"We love comics and all the storytelling possibilities it gives us," Moon said. "We work one in front of the other and, even if we're not working on the same story, we're always together discussing and supporting one another."

With both Bá and Moon writing and illustrating comics, how do they divide the creative honors on ***Daytripper***? "When we were kids reading comics, we never paid attention to who did what on a book—we just liked the stories," Bá said. "That's the way we feel about our stories. Even though most certainly *one* of us will draw the story – in the case of ***Daytripper***, it's Fábio who has the honor – it just matters that we're doing it together. We will both come up with visual ideas for the pages, characters, develop the plots and agree on the dialogues, even if one would do the hard work of writing the script or actually drawing and inking the pages."

"Working with other writers and being just the artist is a relatively new experience for us, but we did it on big spotlight projects, so people know our work mostly by these project," Moon said. "Each one of us has a distinctive art style, so we rarely share art duties like 'pencils and inks,' but the storytelling core of the stories we usually work very closely and have a similar approach.

If ***Daytripper*** does as well as it deserves, will it be possible to do a sequel, or is this story absolutely done once the tenth issue wraps up? "If it does well, it will be all we want it to be," Bá said. "As I said earlier, we like endings. They are *really* important to a good story. We have ours and we're going towards it. If the series does really well, we just hope Vertigo and the readers would ask us for more projects."

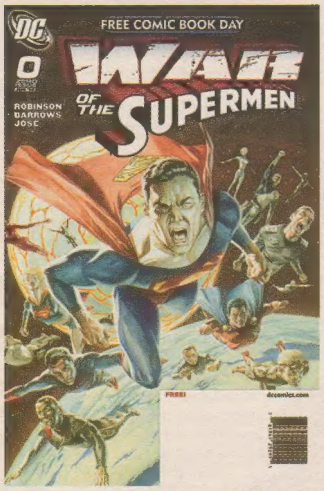
Daytripper #1, the first issue of the ten-issue Vertigo Comics series by *Gabriel Bá & Fábio Moon*, is available in comic shops right now. The second issue follows on January 13th, with the remaining issues appearing monthly through mid-September.

by Cliff Biggers

Courtesy your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!

COMIC SHOP NEWSARAMA

Produced by *Comic Shop News* in cooperation with *newsarama.com*



This Means War!

For the past year, Superman has left his adopted homeworld in the hands of such capable super-replacements as Nightwing, Flamebird, Mon-El, and the Guardian while he struggled to help the former Kandorians transition to their lives on New Krypton. But the tensions between Earth and New Krypton have continued to rise... and in 2010, the winds of war will begin to stir.

More than once in the past year, DC's *Dan DiDio* has said that 2010 was going to be a *big* year for Superman. But now we know just how big... big enough to merit its own event series, ***War of the Supermen.***

The event will kick off on May 1st, 2010 with the special Free Comic Book Day book ***War of the Supermen #0,*** written by *James Robinson* and illustrated by *Eddy Barrows* with a cover by *JG Jones*. Just as they did last year with ***Blackest Night***, DC is launching their big event of the year with a special FCBD issue that will lead into a major limited series.

"***War of the Supermen*** is the culmination of literally years of stories in the Superbooks, all building to a destructive conflict which can have no victors," Superman group editor *Matt Idelson* said. "This Free Comic Book Day #0 issue is going to show the readers that no cows are sacred, and that they don't want to miss this event."

In an interview on ***Time's*** Techland website, Idelson added that, "While ***War of the Supermen*** is designed so it can be read on its own, the stories of the characters-both the main characters and supporting cast-that have populated Superman's books in his absence will be told in the individual titles and some tie-ins."

Tie-ins... does that mean that readers can look for ***War of the Supermen*** to cross over into other DC titles in the same manner as ***Blackest Night?*** "Right now, we're taking the concentrated approach," Idelson said, "limiting the war to the main miniseries and logical titles (i.e. ***Superman, Supergirl,*** etc.), but much like ***Blackest Night*** it's very possible the story will expand to touch upon other titles."

And is there any chance that we might see more S-shield clad heroes in the aftermath of this story arc? "Hmm, how do I answer that?" Idelson said. "You'll *definitely* be seeing a lot more characters with an 'S' on their chests, but *not* the characters you might be thinking of."

Monsters Unleashed

It was one of the most beloved magazines of the early Silver Age, turning thousands of us into lifelong fans of the horror films of Universal, Hammer, and other classic monster-movie studios.

And next year, ***Famous Monsters*** will return in a hefty, more upscale format—but its pages will contain the same passion for monster and horror films that made ***Famous Monsters*** a fan-favorite in the 1960s and 1970s.

IDW has announced that they will relaunch the quarterly-release ***Famous Monsters of Filmland*** in the summer of 2010.

Editorial duties for the magazine will be handled by *Michael Heisler*, a veteran of the comic book industry for over twenty years with experience logged at Marvel Comics, WildStorm Productions, and IDW . "***Famous Monsters*** was far and away my favorite magazine when I was a kid, and there has been nothing quite like it since," Heisler said. "Our goal is to update that magic for a modern audience, with coverage of current horror in all its forms, while continuing to pay tribute to the classic films that started it all. Personally, I'm thrilled to be taking this step down the road that *Forry Ackerman* and *'Chilly Billy' Cardille* [a 1960s Pittsburg late-night horror movie host of ***Chiller Theater***] put me on so many years ago."

Originally launched in 1958, ***Famous Monsters of Filmland*** was one of the first magazines to take readers behind-the-scenes of some of the most popular movies of present and past. Pulling the curtain back on the filmmaking process, the magazine became a lightning rod for legions of young fans, sparking the minds and hearts of future storytellers such as *Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, Guillermo del Toro, Stephen King,* and *John Landis*. Under the guidance of beloved editor-in-chief *Forrest J Ackerman*, credited with nurturing and even inspiring the careers of early contemporaries such as *Ray Bradbury, Ray Harryhausen,* and *L. Ron Hubbard*, the magazine brought monsters to life and made household names out of writers, directors, creature designers, FX artists, and monster makeup technicians.

"I've always loved ***Famous Monsters***, and when I discovered an opportunity to reinvent the brand for modern times, I jumped at it," *Phil Kim*, ***Famous Monsters'*** senior Manager, said. "Knowing the legacy and the great expectations that came with this iconic trademark, I looked long and hard for a suitable company with an impeccable reputation for quality and respect. After a two-year search, I am proud to announce our partnership with IDW."

"***Famous Monsters*** is partially responsible for my lifelong love of horror, so to be involved in helping the magazine relaunch itself into the dreams—or nightmares—of new generations of fans is amazingly gratifying to me," IDW editor-in-chief *Chris Ryall* said. "*Phil Kim's* plans for the magazine are respectful to the brand's history and very forward-thinking at the same time, and I'm happy to be a part of it."

Will the new ***Famous Monsters*** keep the same light, clever tone that defined Forry's work on the original? "I think that's a must, absolutely," Ryall said. "We all want this to stay true to Forry's vision for the magazine."

One change in the new ***Famous Monsters*** that readers will appreciate is the upgraded format and production values. "It'll be a squarebound book, as much of an art book as a magazine," Ryall said. "It'll be printed more in line with, say, *Ash Wood's* ***Swallow*** than an old newsprint magazine. It's likely to be in the 100-page range, with maybe a $10 price tag—but that's still being worked out."

Is there any chance that IDW will complement the new ***Famous Monsters*** with compilations of the original magazine? "This is something we'd all like to do, absolutely," Ryall said. "It'll depend on a lot of clearances happening, but we're going to try. In the meantime, we'll be running classic articles in the back of the new mags, too."

Famous Monsters of Filmland is slated to debut in mid-summer 2010.

Who Knows What's Happening Next In Boys?...

Remember that old story about the blind men and the elephant? Well, Hughie and his compatriots are in much the same situation: What Hughie knows is not what Butcher knows, and what Annie January knows is something else again. But readers will soon

SPIDER-MAN
BY STAN LEE & LARRY LIEBER
THE WALL-CRAWLER GOT IN MY FACE ONCE TOO OFTEN.
NOW HE'S GONNA PAY!
YOU'RE NOT GONNA KILL HIM!?
WHAT DID YOU THINK I'D DO?
TEACH 'IM TO PLAY TEXAS HOLD 'EM?
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EDITORS Cliff Biggers, Ward Batty

Editorial Office
2770 Carillon Crossing
Marietta, GA 30066
cliffbig@comicshopnews.com

Business Office
3577-A Chamblee-Tucker Rd. #215
Atlanta, GA 30341
(770) 939-1364
wbatty@csnsider.com

www.csnsider.com
twitter.com/csnsider

learn everything in the next ***Boys*** story arc, which begins with a prologue in ***Boys #39*** before kicking into high gear in ***Boys #40.***

Boys creator and writer *Garth Ennis* explained what's going on in ***Boys #39,*** a standalone prologue entitled "What I Know." "We're taking stock of events to date and setting up the next move forward," Ennis said. "Butcher's reviewing the files and planning all sorts of dark deeds. The man from Vought American is doing his own scheming, and has made an important new ally at the company. Frenchie's doing his best with the Female, MM's having some R&R. And Hughie's blissfully happy with Annie, unaware of what's coming down the pipe."

So what *is* coming down the pipe? Is it safe to assume that "what I know" will become "what other people know, too?" That is, are some secrets about to become public knowledge? "Very much so, yes," Ennis said. "But the new arc—'The Innocents,' which runs through ***Boys #s 40-43***—also introduces a new team of heroes, Superduper. These guys finally answer the question of where the good superheroes are in the Boys' world—genuine heroes, the defenders of truth and justice, warriors for the American way. In other words, the real thing at long last. They're a teen team from the far future of our planet, and all they want to do is what's right.

"We're building towards some unpleasant revelations, as mentioned, but we'll also be seeing how Hughie's experiences at ***Herogasm*** are becoming increasingly difficult for him to live with."

Speaking of ***Herogasm***—what led to Ennis' decision to make that a standalone miniseries rather than featuring it as an arc in the ongoing ***Boys*** series? "Some spin-offs stand alone, like ***The Good Old Boys*** and ***Barracuda***. Some tie into the ongoing plot, like ***Saint of Killers*** or ***One Man's War.*** ***Herogasm*** just turned out to be the latter kind," Ennis said. He also confirmed that there will be additional ***Boys*** spinoffs in the near future. "There'll be another miniseries in 2010 featuring Hughie, and a third the following year with Butcher."

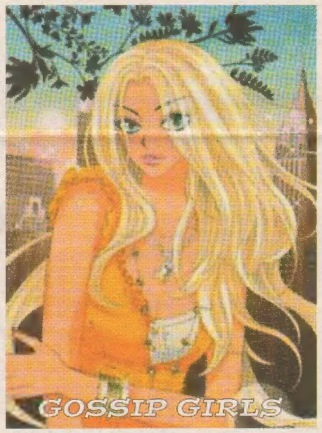
The more miniseries, the better as far as fans of ***The Boys*** are concerned—especially considering the fact that the main series is now past its halfway point. "As I said earlier this year, we've expanded the run from sixty to seventy issues," Ennis said.

One miniseries that *isn't* in the works is a crossover involving the Boys and other superheroes. "The only characters worth crossing over with would be from Marvel or DC, and neither publisher would be stupid enough to let The Boys loose on their characters, fun though it would be," Ennis said. "The only way you're ever going to see that sort of thing is by proxy!"

The Boys #39, featuring the standalone prologue "What I Know," is slated for mid-February release.

CSNsider

•Yen Press will launch a manga series based on *Cecily Von Ziegesar's* teen fiction series ***Gossip Girls***. The series, which focuses on the senior year of Blair and Vanessa, is written and illustrated by ***Bring It On!*** creator *HyeKyung Baek;* the first installment of the serialized story will appear in the January



issue of the manga anthology magazine ***Yen Plus***. With an audience of more than five million readers for the novels and more than two million viewers for the CW television series, the ***Gossip Girls*** manga should have no trouble finding an eager readership!

•DC's seventh original animation DVDs, ***Justice League: Crisis on Two Earths,*** is slated for February 23rd release. The story by *Dwayne McDuffie* begins when a good Lex Luthor arrives from an alternate universe to get help from the Justice League in saving his Earth from a team of villains with identical powers to the Justice League. The voice cast will include *Mark Harmon* as Superman, *James Woods* as Owlman, *Chris Noth* as Lex Luthor, *William Baldwin* as Batman, *Gina Torres* as Superwoman, and *Bruce Davison* as the President. The film will be released in three versions: single-disc version for $19.98; two-disc Special Edition for $24.98, and Blu-ray for $29.99. Both the Special Edition and Blu-ray versions will include the first in a new series of animated shorts, ***DC Showcase: The Spectre,*** written by *Steve Niles.*

•Pleased with the strong response to their recent Marvel trading card offerings, Upper Deck has several more Marvel projects in the work for 2010, including January's ***Super Hero Squad Trading Cards,*** based on the Cartoon Network series and ***Iron Man II Trading Cards,*** an April release featuring photo cards, classic comic cover cards, autograph cards signed by the film's stars, memorabilia cards, and more.

In late February, Upper Deck is also offering the first product for the Marvel trading card game, ***Marvel Superstars TCG: Iron Man Vs. Wolverine.*** The 60-card set will include two 30-card starter decks, game token, and four exclusive cards. This will be followed by two more TCG products in May: ***Iron Man II Starter Decks*** and the first series of ***Marvel Superstars TCG Boosters.***

•Marvel will offer a 1-for-15 ***Ultimate Comics Enemy #1 Villain Variant.***

•Marvel has added a 1-for-15 variant cover edition for ***Incredible Hulk #606.***

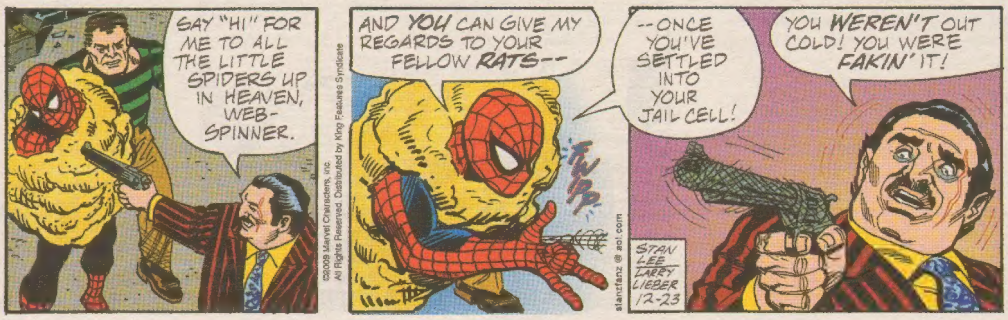
•DC has cancelled its ***DC Library: Shazam!—The Monster Society of Evil Hardcover,*** which was to have reprinted the legendary Golden Age story serialized in ***Captain Marvel Adventures #s 22-46.*** No word yet as to when or if this book will be rescheduled, but let's hope to—this material is too good to remain uncollected!

•Marvel has cancelled its 1-for-15 variants for ***Ultimate Comics Avengers #6, Ultimate Comics Spider-Man #7, Hulk #20, Incredible Hulk #607,*** and ***X-Men Forever #18.***

•Previously announced second printings of ***Vengeance of Moon Knight #3*** and ***Black Widow: Deadly Origin #1*** have been cancelled by Marvel.

Back to Press

•***Siege: The Cabal 2nd Printing*** (OCT098175) featuring a variant cover image by *Michael Lark,* in stores 1/6/10.


SAY "HI" FOR ME TO ALL THE LITTLE SPIDERS UP IN HEAVEN, WEB-SPINNER.
AND YOU CAN GIVE MY REGARDS TO YOUR FELLOW RATS--
FWIP
--ONCE YOU'VE SETTLED INTO YOUR JAIL CELL!
YOU WEREN'T OUT COLD! YOU WERE FAKIN' IT!
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The 19th Annual C

2009 is almost over, with 2010 looming in the shadows. And long-time *CSN* readers know what that means: it's time for our 19th annual assortment of awards for the past year's achievements (some noteworthy and some quite dubious). So let's take a look at the best and worst that the past twelve months have delivered; join us as we present the *CSN Red K Awards*—our way of recognizing some of the highlights and lowlights of the past year. (As Superman fans know, Red K can be unpredictable!)

The "2009's Bright Spot" Award

Blackest Night

When you look back on all the big event storylines that failed to deliver on their promise, it's remarkable when a book actually does everything it promises and then some—but that's just what ***Blackest Night*** does. Major characters return, other major characters die, and there's a reason for all of it. And the energy extends beyond the core title to a wide range of tie-in miniseries and story arcs. How's it all going to end? We don't know any more than you do—but you can be sure we'll be there for each and every installment!

The "Ring in the New" Award

DC's Blackest Night Ring Promotion

And as if the energy of the ***Blackest Night*** saga wasn't enough, DC found away to ramp up the excitement even further with eight collectible rings. For the cost of ***Blackest Night #1*** and seven November tie-ins, readers could don whichever color of Lantern ring that represented the *mood du jour*. Judging from how quickly those tie-in books sold out, it's safe to say this promotion was the most successful marketing scheme of the year.

The "That's Life" Award

Bluewater's Biographical Comics

Until last year, everyone assumed that biographical comics were part of a bygone age—but now Bluewater Productions has proven that there's plenty of life in that comics genre that focuses on the lives of the famous (political, musical, and literary). Hey, maybe next year they can add a series of biographies of comic book greats!

The "Into Every Life Too Much Reign Must Fall" Award

Dark Reign

The concept behind ***Dark Reign*** was rock-solid: one of the most malevolent villains in the Marvel Universe is revered as a heroic defender of humanity and gets carte blanche to reinvent superheroes however he sees fit. And had that storyline continued for three or four or even six months, it would have made for some riveting reading. But a year and more than a hundred books later, it's still going on, and everyone's looking at their watches and waiting for the next bus...

The "Linemen of the Year" Award

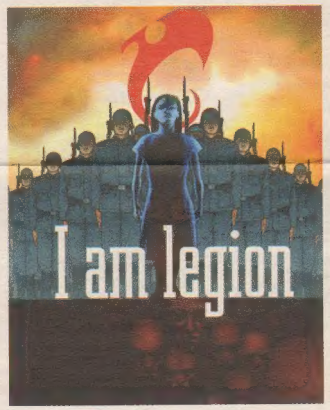
Image United

When readers first heard that Image was working on a crossover book written by *Robert Kirkman* and illustrated by the Image founders (*Erik Larsen, Rob Liefeld, Todd McFarlane, Whilce Portacio, Marc Silvestri, & Jim Valentino*), most were dubious. Not only did Image deliver, but they delivered a first-class project that actually worked! This six-man jam session, which features each Image founder illustrating every appearance of his own characters, looks great and reads just as well. If you ever enjoyed Image's 1990's best-sellers (and based on the millions of copies sold back then, a lot of you did!), this one's a must-read!

The "Dis-Incentive" Award

Undesirable Incentive Covers

Okay, we get it: for better or worse, the incentive cover is here, and everyone is playing the incentive game. But wouldn't it make sense that, if a publisher is going to produce an incentive cover, it should be more desirable than the standard cover? Judging from the large number of 1-for-10, 1-for-20, 1-for-25, and even 1-for-200 covers that feature mediocre art and unappealing motifs, someone didn't get the message that these covers should feature art worthy of their incentive status.



The "Read Any Good Comics Late-ly?" Award

I Am Legion

Okay, we're used to seeing late comics because a writer or an artist missed a deadline—but how did the folks at Devil's Due manage to run months late on ***I Am Legion*** when it was a reprint of already-published material?...

The "On the Road Again" Award

Archie's "Road Not Taken" Marriage Saga

Face it—if we had told you that 2009 would be the year that *Archie* would jump to the top of many comic shops' sales lists, you'd have thought we were crazy. Then came *Michael Uslan & Stan Goldberg's* six-parter that showed readers what the future might hold if Archie married either Veronica or Betty, and suddenly Riverdale's a hot destination for legions of comics readers.

The "MIA" Award

Superman

He's the star of *Superman* and *Action Comics*, and he doesn't appear in either one of them. Who can explain to us why this is a good idea?...

The "Noble Enterprise" Award

Star Trek: Countdown

IDW had already proven that there was an audience for their ***Star Trek*** comics franchise, but their ***Star Trek: Countdown*** movie prequel, featuring the origin of the movie's bad guy, demonstrated just how successful—and popular—these books could be.

YOU'RE GOING DOWN, BIGSHOT.
BOYS! PLUG 'IM!
WHAT DO I PAY YOU FOR?
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CSN Red K Awards

The "Perfectly Horrible Idea" Award

Dr. Horrible

The oneshot inspired by the "singalong blog" was such a hit that we can't be the only ones hoping to see a *Dr. Horrible* monthly added to the Dark Horse schedule in 2010.

The "Color Us Disappointed" Award

Barry Windsor-Smith Conan Archives

When Dark Horse first announced this two-volume compilation of *Barry Windsor-Smith's* entire run of *Conan* stories, they told readers that the books would present remastered color using the original color palette. This would mean a return to the more subtle color of the original comics, which best showed off Windsor-Smith's linework. Alas, less than a month later, Dark Horse announced a change in plans: the hardcovers would feature the same reworked Photoshop-heavy colors as was used in the *Conan Chronicles* volumes. That's one color change that left us very blue indeed...

The "That's Another Define Mess You've Gotten Us Into" Award

Marvel's "Graphic Novels"

Quick, define "graphic novel."

Now, if you said anything other than 6" x 9" trade paperback, you've not up to speed on Marvel's definitions.

While the rest of the industry has something totally different in mind when they say "graphic novel," Marvel quietly redefined the term earlier this year to mean "smaller than normal collected volume."

The "Black Hole" Award

All Star Batman & Robin

Remember way back in 2005 when this series debuted? Remember how excited everyone was about the prospect of an original Batman series by *Frank Miller & Jim Lee?* Well, here we are, more than four years later, and we're still not through the first story arc, and we've gone almost a year since the last issue of the series appeared, and all the other All Star books, such as Batgirl and Wonder Woman, are off the schedule. It appears that this "All Star" has collapsed on itself...

The "Turnabout Is Fair Play" Award

Irredeemable & Incorruptible

The first spotlights the world's greatest hero as he reinvents himself as a malevolent villain; the second stars a former bad guy who's undergone an ethical reformation and is now fighting for the side of the good guys. And thanks to the storytelling skills of *Mark Waid,* both of them are essential reading for anyone who's ever enjoyed superhero adventures.

The "Absolute Shame" Award

DC's Out of Print Absolutes
Dishonorable Mention:
Marvel's Out of Print Omnibus Volumes

Some of DC's finest material has been collected in these lavish, oversized, slipcased volumes... but alas, many of those volumes are now totally out of print. Come on, guys—books like ***Absolute Batman: Hush, Absolute Crisis on Infinite Earths, Absolute Watchmen,*** and ***Absolute League of Extraordinary Gentlemen Volumes 1 & 2*** deserve to be perpetually in stock! (And the same holds true for all those Marvel *Omnibus* volumes that have slipped out of print—these deserve to be evergreen additions to the publisher's lineup!)

The "Economic Stimulus Plan" Award

Amazing Spider-Man #583 Barack Obama Cover

The economy may still be more than a little turbulent, but a lot of comic shops got quite a fiscal shot in the arm when crowds rushed in to latch onto their copy of the Obama variant of *Amazing Spider-Man #583.*

The "EC Come EC Go" Award

EC Archives

After a gangbusters start with a new release every couple of months, the flow of wonderfully restored ***EC Archives*** slowed to a trickle, with only one volume appearing in 2009. And we were hoping to have the entire collection on our shelves in full color by this time! Let's hope that 2010 is the year that this essential series gets back on schedule.

The "Buck Stops Here" Award

Vertigo's $1 premiere issues

Talk about putting your money where your mouth is! *Karen Berger* and her Vertigo team were so impressed with new series ***The Unwritten, Greek Street,*** and ***Sweet Tooth*** that they offered full-length first issues for a bargain $1 pricetag to entice readers to give 'em a try. Unlike many publishers who offer a few pages of story and a lot of sales hype in their bargain priced premiere issues, Vertigo figured nothing can sell a good story better than the story itself, so they let the content do the selling.

The "Slowpoke" Award

Flash: Rebirth

Anyone else think it's ironic that the book the reintroduces the Silver Age's fastest man on earth is months behind schedule?

The "Waiting on a Miracle" Award

Miracleman

The good news? Marvel says that they *will* be publishing ***Miracleman*** comics in the near future. The bad news? We're not sure if their publishing plans will include reprints of the acclaimed and far-too-long-out-of-print 1980s series featuring work by *Alan Moore, Neil Gaiman,* and others. Let's hope that, by this time next year, we're all enjoying those great stories in a handsomely designed ***Omnibus*** volume...

The "Archives Sim-ulation" Award

Cerebus Archives

Talk about a creator who cares about his fans! Rather than reissuing the entire run of *Cerebus* in Archives form with directors-cut-style extras, *Dave Sim* left the trade paperbacks as they were and added an affordable comics series that included *just* the bonus material, commentary, and historical background info. Now if Dave could just con-

DROP THE GUN AND I'LL GO EASY ON YOU.
IF HE FIRES WILDLY HE MAY HURT SOMEONE!
IF I SHOOT AND MISS--THERE'LL BE NO SECOND CHANCE!
BUT IF I DON'T--IT'S PRISON!
NO MATTER HOW TENSE THINGS ARE, WE'D NEVER FORGET TO WISH YOU
MERRY CHRISTMAS!
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 12-25
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vince DVD manufacturers to do the same thing rather than expecting me to repurchase those discs every couple of years!...

The "Size Matters" Award

Wednesday Comics

The character roster was impressive—Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, Flash, Green Lantern, and several others. The talent roster was even more impressive—*Neil Gaiman, Joe Kubert, Paul Pope, Dave Gibbons, Brian Stelfreeze, Ian Churchill, Lee Bermejo, Brian Azzarello, Kyle Baker,* and others. But the unusual oversized format—14" x 20" larger-than-current-newspaper-sized pages printed on newsprint to make this resemble the Sunday funnies section you'd love to see—made this a real publishing event unlike anything else on the stands. DC recognizes the importance of that distinctive size, so the collected volume (slated for 2010 release) will also be featured in an oversized format to recreate the newspaper-comics-section sense of wonder.

The "Let's Make a Deal" Award

Marvel & Disney

The deal hasn't been done yet (acquisitions of this magnitude take some time, after all), but it's already one of the most buzzworthy comics events of 2009. Will things change at Marvel after the merger goes through? Will the Disney books, now selling quite well at Boom Studios, move to Marvel? Answer cloudy, try again later...

The "Get The Lead Out" Award

All those superb UK magazines with their collectible lead figurines

Marvel Superheroes, DC superheroes, *Star Wars* vehicles, *Buffy* and *Angel* cast members—these fully-painted lead figurines are the collectible bargain of the year, with design and color work that often surpasses the quality of larger statues. These handsome sculpts make those old Heroclix figures cluttering your desktop look positively cheesy by comparison!

The "MIA" Award 2

Edgar Rice Burroughs comics

Robert E. Howard is undergoing a comics renaissance, with projects spotlighting *Conan, Kull,* and *Solomon Kane. HP Lovecraft's* Cthulhu Mythos is the inspiration for numerous comics projects from Boom, Marvel, and other publishers. So howcome the creations of one of the 20th Century's premiere adventure storytellers are totally absent from comic shop racks (and alas, from prose bookshelves as well)? Tarzan, John Carter, Carson Napier, David Innes... so many great heroes, just waiting for someone to do 'em right!

The "Magnum Opus" Award

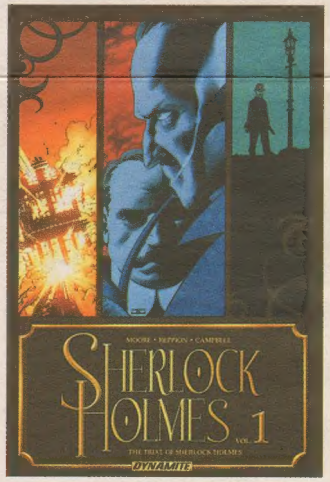
Bloom County: The Complete Library Volume One

Kudos to IDW for bringing into print one of the most popular comic strips of the past fifty years—and they managed to convince creator *Berke Breathed* to contribute commentary, making it doubly rewarding for fans who want to re-experience the delight of this strip and its mixture of humor, satire, and social commentary. (Now howsabout that *Complete Doonesbury,* guys?...)

The "Holmes Sweet Holmes" Award

Sherlock Holmes comics

Dynamite's ***Sherlock Holmes*** miniseries by *Leah Moore, John Reppion, & Aaron Campbell*... Sterling's adaptation of ***Hound of the Baskervilles*** by *Ian Edginton & INJ Culbard*... Wildstorm's "Holmes versus zombies" ***Victorian Undead*** by *Ian Edginton & Davide Fabbri*... Moonstone's ***Sherlock Holmes & Kolchak...*** It's almost like there's a movie coming up, huh? Whatever the motivation for this resurgence of well-crafted Holmes comics, it's great to see the world's finest consulting detective back in comic book action again.



The "Taking Sides" Award

Spider-Man Newspaper Strips HC

Obviously we're fans of the Spidey newspaper strip, so we were excited when Marvel slated a compilation of the earliest strips by *Stan Lee & John Romita.* While we were glad to get the material, we were as disappointed as every other Spidey fan at the package: a standard-bound book that has to be turned sideways to be read (why wasn't it bound horizontally?), and no color for the Sunday strips. So close and yet so far..

The "Missed Opportunity Award

Chew Volume 1 TP

Come on, guys—shouldn't the collected volume of *Chew* have been *digest* sized?...

The "Into Every Life a Little Rayner Must Fall" Award

Green Lantern Corps #42

In a field where the death of the most insignificant character is touted as if it's a major event, it was almost shocking to see a major character's death presented with so little advance warning. (We thought death only worked that way in the real world...)

The "What's Up? Doc!" Award

Batman/Doc Savage Special

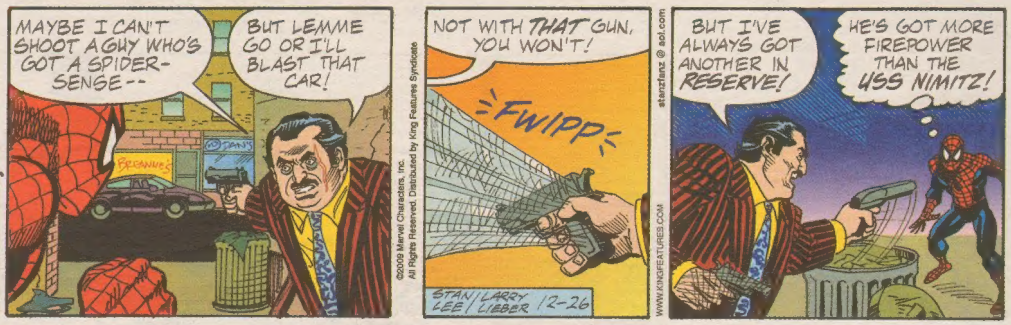
At long last, Doc Savage makes his return to comics in this unique special set in a superhero-less world that's an amalgam of the 1930s and our own modern world. Now that we've thrilled to the introductory oneshot, we can't wait to see next year's miniseries!

The "Blasts from the Past" Award

The Best of Simon & Kirby HC
Strange Suspense: Steve Ditko Archives Volume One HC

Has there ever been a better year for fans of classic comics material? In addition to all the great reprint volumes that Marvel, DC, Dark Horse, and others offer month in and month out, these two books present some of the rarest material by comics' most influential talents. ***The Best of Simon & Kirby*** offers a comprehensive overview of the duo's career, from their earliest Golden Age collaborations through their final work together. ***Strange Suspense*** features some of Ditko's hardest-to-find material from Ajax, Charlton, and other publishers—work done long before his Marvel days. And better yet, both of them are the kickoff volumes in multi-book sets!

(And as an aside—have you noticed the superlative results that publishers are getting from scanned comics nowadays? These books are shot from the original comics, but they lose absolutely nothing in the recreation. We've come a long way from the days of Theakstonizing, when classic comics had to be destroyed to produce a restored version!)


MAYBE I CAN'T SHOOT AGUY WHO'S GOT A SPIDER-SENSE--
BUT LEMME GO OR I'LL BLAST THAT CAR!
FRIENDS
NOT WITH THAT GUN, YOU WON'T!
FWIPP
STAN/LARRY LEE/LIEBER 12-26
BUT I'VE ALWAYS GOT ANOTHER IN RESERVE!
HE'S GOT MORE FIREPOWER THAN THE USS NIMITZ!
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Follow *Spider-Man* every week in *Comic Shop News*!

The "Godsend" Award

J. Michael Straczynski's Thor

Thor's original series came to an almost unlamented end earlier this decade, and for a few years the world was Thor-less and no one seemed to care. But *J. Michael Straczynski* rediscovered the awe and wonder of *Stan Lee & Jack Kirby*'s Thunder God, propelling the Asgardian saga to the top of the sales charts and making *Thor* a must-read book again. Alas, his run on the title wrapped up back in November—but thanks to JMS and Marvel for giving readers a clear ending to one of Thor's most remarkable adventures.

The "Making History" Award

Kurt Busiek & Mark Bagley's Trinity

In an industry populated by a number of creators who can't produce more than a half-dozen books a year, *Kurt Busiek & Mark Bagley* reminded us what happens when talent and professionalism come together: they managed to put out a year-long weekly book without missing a single deadline. Way to go, guys!... and we have the names of a few creators we'd love for you to share your secrets with!

The "Blink and You Missed It" Award

TMNT Collected Volume One TP

The good news? Eastman and Laird finally listened to fans' pleas and offered a trade paperback compilation of the first eleven issues of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* along with the four microseries they did in the 1980s. The bad news? The book sold out in a matter of days and is now pretty much impossible to find....

The "Priceless" Award

Wizard and Comics Buyer's Guide

2009 is the year that both comics magazines dropped their monthly price guides, revealing just how many collectors were buying those publications to find out what their collections were worth. Maybe it's time for a *Comics Values Monthly* renaissance...

And Now...

It's your turn!

You've seen our awards—now what accomplishments, near-misses, and/or failures would you like to recognize? Remedy our oversight with an award of your own! Remember, cleverness counts—and we encourage you to mind your manners and avoid vitriolic vituperation!

E-mail your nominations to

redk@comicshopnews.com

or snail-mail 'em to:

CSN Red K Awards
2770 Carillon Crossing
Marietta GA 30066

Not only will our faves see print in *CSN* in March, but we'll choose from among the published entries and award a few special prizes to the lucky winners.

twitter.com/csnsider

Planning for a Siege

Want to follow Marvel's entire *Siege* saga? Well, you've got plenty of reading to look forward to! Courtesy of Marvel, here's a checklist of the 37 *Siege* tie-in books and their release schedule:

December *Siege* tie-ins (some of which are already available in comic shops) include

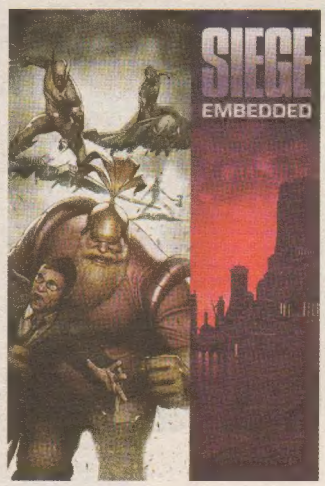
- *Siege: The Cabal*
- *Avengers: The Initiative #31*
- *Origins of Siege*

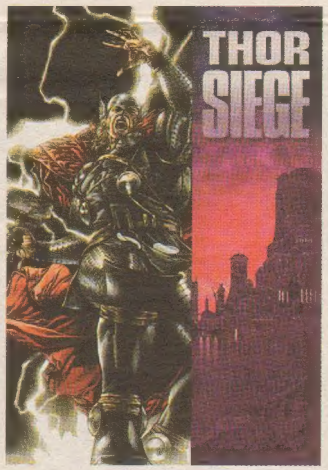
January *Siege* tie-ins include

- *Siege #1*
- *Avengers: The Initiative #32*
- *Dark Avengers #13*
- *Dark Wolverine #82*
- *New Avengers #61*
- *Siege: Embedded #1*
- *Siege: Storming Asgard—Heroes and Villains*

February *Siege* tie-ins include:

- *Siege #2*
- *Avengers: The Initiative 333*
- *Dark Avengers #14*
- *Dark Wolverine #62*
- *Siege: Embedded #2*

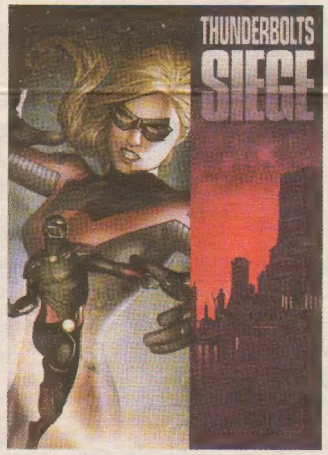




- *Thor #607*
- *Thunderbolts #141*

March *Siege* tie-ins include:

- *Siege #3*
- *Avengers: The Initiative #34*
- *Dark Avengers #15*
- *Dark Wolverine 384*
- *Mighty Avengers #63*
- *New Mutants #11*
- *Siege: Embedded #3*
- *Thor #608*
- *Thunderbolts #142*



April *Siege* tie-ins include:

- *Siege #4*
- *Avengers: The Initiative 335*
- *Dark Avengers #16*
- *Fallen* (not final title)
- *Mighty Avengers #36*
- *New Avengers #64*
- *Siege: Embedded #4*
- *Thor #609*
- *Thunderbolts #143.*

How big is *Siege?* Well, as Marvel puts it, "The comic book event seven years in the making begins here as every major Marvel character gets involved in the greatest assembly of heroes and villains you've ever seen!"